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إن الدين عند الله الإسلام

The Review of Religions

Edited by GHULAM FARID MALIK, M. A.

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CONTENTS

		Pages
1.	PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE —By Hazrat Khalifa-tul-Masih, II ...	503
2.	DOES CIVILIZATION NEED RELIGION ? —By Mr. Mohd. Aslam, B.A. (Cantab.) ...	508
3.	ISLAM IS A MISSIONARY RELIGION —By Mr. Nazir Ahmad Bajwa, M.A. ...	520
4.	ISLAM IN THE WEST —By Mrs. Hidayat Budd Sadiq of Amsterdam (Holland) ...	527
5.	COMPANIONATE DIVORCE —By Maulvi Muhammad Din, B.A., Late Muslim Missionary in America ...	532
6.	NOTES AND COMMENTS— Islam in Madagascar—The Bible in Muslim Lands—What is the Meaning of Life—India in 1921 and 1931—The Case for Filipino Independence ...	535
	NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN	543

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بسم اللہ الرحمن الرحیم

نحمدہ ونصلی علی رسولہ الکریم

In the name of Allah, the most Beneficent and the most Merciful
We praise Him and invoke His blessings upon
His exalted Prophet.

" A prophet came unto the world and the world accepted him not, but God shall accept him and establish his truth with mighty signs."

PRINCIPLES OF ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE*

(By Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, Head of the Ahmadiyya Community.)

Though the Muslims generally do not realize it, it is nevertheless a fact that very few of the non-Muslims ever study Islam as a religion. There are many among them who take interest in Islamic history, Islamic culture and Islamic social system. Many officials of such Governments as have to deal with Muslims either in regard to internal administration, or in regard to foreign political relations are obliged to know something of these subjects, because without doing it they cannot adequately discharge their duties. But on the whole non-Muslims are quite ignorant about Islam and Islamic viewpoint. Not long ago the Government of India, in passing an Act known as the Sarda Act, quite misunderstood the Islamic point of view,

* Translated into English, by Mr. M. Hasan.—*Ed.*

with the result that it made a serious blunder, causing thereby much unnecessary agitation and trouble in the country. Hence there is a crying need that the Islamic point of view in regard to various social, religious and cultural matters should be carefully and repeatedly explained so as to prevent the repetition in future of mistakes of the nature of the Sarda Act. In order to meet this much-felt need, articles have already been written and will continue to be written in this journal which will afford correct information to all those who, from the international point of view, wish to gain accurate and first-hand knowledge about Islam. The dissemination of this knowledge may prove useful in removing international misunderstandings and may pave the way to international co-operation and to world peace and unity on which the future progress of the world depends.

Islamic jurisprudence is based on and is derived from the Holy Quran. The Quran is held by the Muslims to be the revealed Word of God, revealed as regards both its meanings and its words. Every syllable of the Holy Quran is a literal revelation from on high into which Muhammad, the Holy Prophet of Islam, has not interpolated one jot or tittle. On this book is founded the jurisprudence of Islam, the religious law of Islam, the social system of Islam, the political science of Islam, and the fiscal science of Islam. The Muslims further hold the belief that a revealed word of God cannot be fully understood and comprehended nor accurately interpreted without the help of a religious teacher, and that as a revealed book not only shapes and regulates our life in this world but also determines our life to come, the religious teacher is divinely taught the deeply hidden shades of meanings which underly the revealed word and his interpretations of it which he gives out to his people are themselves based on divine revelation.

Such a religious teacher expounds the Quran according to the interpretation revealed to him by God so that no doubt can remain as to the real significance of the Holy Word. Where God intends any portion of the Book to be interpreted

and acted upon in a particular way, the teacher will carry out the injunction only in that one, and where there it is meant, in accordance with the different human conditions and tastes to be acted upon in different ways, he will practise that part in different ways and his followers are at liberty to choose any of those variant forms of practice. Thus what outwardly seems to be a discord is in reality concord.

It is in reference to this fact that the Holy Prophet says :— " My followers are like unto the stars, whomsoever you follow he will give you guidance." Expressing the same thing in another way, the Holy Prophet says :—" Difference of opinion among my followers is a blessing." That is to say the different schools of thought in regard to various theological questions do not exist among the Muslims through ignorance or lack of knowledge, but because God mercifully taking into consideration the difference in men's temperaments and mental equipments has provided variants in ritual observances and in other matters of details, all of which are equally lawful.

That this is so is admitted by all the leaders of religious thought in Islam, whether they are the descendants of the Holy Prophet or of any other of his companions. But the latter day Muslims have failed to grasp this reality with the result that they have created differences where none existed before.

The commentators of the Quran unanimously believe that the *Shariat* or the religious law of Islam as revealed to the Holy Prophet by God and explained by him in the light of that revelation is all based on and is deduced from the Holy Quran. The Holy Quran thus forms the fountain-head of every religious, social and moral law.

That part of the Islamic religion which relates to Practice, that is to say, to what the Holy Prophet illustrated by his own example and was faithfully copied by his companions, and after them by their descendants and which has been carefully recorded and handed down to us, is called the *Sunnat*.

The *Sunnat* comes next to the Holy Quran and is subordinate to it in importance not because it is something extraneous to the Quran and therefore inferor to it in value but because it treats of matters of detail and because also the medium of its transmission to us is not quite as sound and secure as that of the Holy Quran.

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Since as compared with the religious observances in daily practice, oral sayings are difficult to remember fully the *Hadis* comes next in importance to the *Sunnat*. The *Hadis* contains numerous discrepancies, and in many things it clashes both with the Holy Quran and the *Sunnat*. As for the Quran and the *Sunnat*, they rarely disagree. The *Sunnat* far exceeds the *Hadis* in value. In fact, the chief thing which the Muslims stand in need of is the practical illustration which the Holy Prophet gave of the various Islamic observances. As for the *Hadis*, it is a collection of verbal explanations given by the Holy Prophet of the above observances. The *Hadis* is not directly concerned with the practice of an observance, but rather discusses some point of belief or some moral virtue. Thus the *Hadis* is not anything of independent value, but is only a part of the *Sunnat*. The *Sunnat* contains nothing discrepant and what seeming disagreement one finds therein is, as I have already stated above, in reality no disagreement, but are merely slight misunderstandings which have resulted from the various forms of some observances all equally allowable.

Regarding the *Hadis*, the Muslims think that in case of a doubt arising regarding any point, the matter should be referred to the Quran. If it proves to be in conformity with the teachings of the Quran, it should be accepted, otherwise not. Secondly, the same matter should be subjected to the historical test, and if it fails to satisfy that test, it should be rejected. About the *Hadis*, it is believed by learned Islamic theologians that except those portions of it which treat of historical incidents it, too, is based on revelation of the Holy Prophet as is evident from the following Quranic verse :— "All that our Apostle says relating to matters of theology is a revelation; he says

nothing from himself." Thus every true and authentic saying of the Holy Prophet is in the nature of a commentary on the Holy Quran.

The following are the points to be remembered when explaining the text of the Holy Quran :— (1) Language. (2) Grammar. (3) Arabic idoms. (4) One Quranic verse should be explained consistently with the other verses. (5) Laws of God as explained in the Holy Quran.

These are the five points which must always be borne in mind when interpreting any verse of the Holy Quran. No meaning assigned to any verse can be regarded as correct if it does not satisfy these requirements. The same rule applies to the *Hadis*.

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DOES CIVILIZATION NEED RELIGION?

(By Mr. Muhammad Aslam, B. A. [Cantab.].)

[The following lecture, except for a few changes which the author introduced while preparing it for the press was delivered by Mr. Aslam in a symposium on the above subject, which was held on the evening of the 19th November in the Y. M. C. A. Hall, Lahore. The symposium which excited great interest, was arranged by the Islamic Research Institute, and was presided over by the Right Reverend George Dunsford Barne, the Bishop of Lahore. The other speakers were the Rev. L. Bevan Jones, Principal, Henry Martyn School of Islamic Studies, and Professor Gulshan Rai of the Sanatana Dharma College, Lahore.—*Ed. R. R.*]

I

I take civilization to mean the business of living together, which business we broadly carry out in our family life, and in our industrial, political, and international relations. Ever since man became civilized he has had to carry this business out efficiently and well. In fact the level of civilization which he has reached in different periods of history has depended on the degree to which he has been able to carry out this business of living together satisfactorily.

To-day, most of these relations which constitute the task of civilization have become very complex, and a combination of circumstances which penetrating scholars are rapidly bringing out, has resulted in making the entire structure of civilization shaky, unreliable, and in imminent danger of being washed away by a catastrophe which may spring upon mankind at any time. The business of civilization, in a word, is in a very bad way to-day. If competent observation[1] is to be believed, the great human institution of the family is seriously threatened with disruption; industrial relations are strained to the point of producing an incurable hatred between class and class; and the

[1] See Radhakrishnan: *Kalki or The Future of Civilization.*

wider international relations are bad enough to provoke, in the words of a distinguished writer "the laughter of the gods".[1]

In the past, the task of cementing people and drawing them together, and enabling them to live a satisfactory common life has been largely carried out by religion. But to-day it seems as though the task is too huge and too difficult to be performed by this ancient hand-maid of man's morals. Or, perhaps, religion has difficulties of its own. At any rate, the modern mind has become very distrustful of religion. It does not look to it for the task of rebuilding civilization. It looks rather to the wisdom of man unaided by God, to devise a plan by which to save civilization from degenerating into the life of the jungle.

II

However complex our civilization may have become, and however difficult it may be to rebuild family, social, and international relations, on foundations of security, justice, and happiness, it is impossible to save and reform civilization by any other means than religion. I am perfectly willing to let our wisest men try and devise a plan by which to make civilization worthy of mankind. I am willing, for instance, that some of the wisest human leaders that we can think of should get together and reconstruct civilization but I am certain that they themselves will shudder at the enormity of the task. They will know far too much of the difficulties and of the problems which beset civilization to-day, even to try successfully to attempt such a task. If they, however, seriously made the attempt they will probably end in violent disagreements and the task of finding a satisfactory solution to the perplexities of civilization will be converted into the task of criticising one another; there will be philosophical and pseudo-philosphical wrangles which will have no end. If perchance, our wise men succeed in producing an agreed scheme, that scheme will have no authority behind it to make it acceptable to everybody and to all classes of people. Indeed, it is the essential weakness of all man-made schemes that they do not grip the hearts of

[1] Prof. William McDougall in *World Chaos*.

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people. They do not strike us as impartial and just. There always is somebody or the other, some class or the other, who will complain that the law to which they are being subjected is partial and designed to favour one class against another. Do not our human governments keep legislating about all kinds of matters, about domestic, social, and industrial relations? And has not the League of Nations taken upon itself the business of legislating about international affairs? And are not these laws and findings being continually condemned by one section or another as being partial, as being designed to help one against another, as being pro-this or pro-that? Do not minorities complain that the laws are designed to serve the interests of majorities and do not majorities complain that the laws are designed to serve the interests of powerful minorities? Do not women complain that men make the laws to suit their own interests? And do not men complain that certain laws concede far too much to women? Have we not had certain laws condemned as pro-labour and other laws as pro-capital? And lastly, have we not had it said of the League of Nations that it is not a League of *all* Nations?

When such has been the fate of man-made laws, how can we expect that any social scheme for the whole of the world—it may be designed with all the care and thought that human wisdom can command—how can we expect that such a scheme will ever command the confidence of all human beings, of men as well as women, of labour as well as capital, of the weak as well as the strong nations? Even supposing that human wisdom could produce a social scheme not only agreed, but also one commanding the confidence of all humanity, who can guarantee that it will put the entire species of mankind, men, women, the strong and the weak, the rich and the poor, under an equal discipline? Will they not treat such a scheme as they have treated all man-made schemes? Will they not quarrel and complain about it? Will they not try to avoid their obligations under it by clever and ingenious excuses? Shall we not have a crop of lawyers who will help all transgressors to sin with impunity? And finally, how can we ever be

sure that any such scheme will be more than an experiment in human reform ?

III

I cannot go on pointing to such things. I must be content with saying that if the task of rejuvenating civilization is to be put in the care of human wisdom the situation is hopeless. Let us therefore try and see if the ancient guardian of man's morality, religion, can help us to-day as it has done in the ages past. Let us not ask ourselves whether any one given religion is completely satisfactory. Let us not ask whether we can believe or not certain things that any given religion asks us to believe. Nor let us quarrel whether any given teaching is capable of being practised to-day or not. Let us broadly ask ourselves, if we *could* have a satisfactory religion, would it not answer human difficulties, in a way far better than human wisdom ever can answer them? Everybody will agree, I think, that religion will solve these difficulties in a way in which nothing else can. If we had, as it were, God Himself to provide us with the necessary teaching to make harmonious and equitable, our social as well our international relations, it would be a very different matter. Such a teaching would inspire confidence in us, as having been fashioned by an Author perfectly equal to His task. It would be a teaching fashioned by One Who is the Source of all Knowledge and all Power. Once provided, it would lay all human disagreements at rest. We would perhaps put slightly different meanings on it, but that would be a different matter from not agreeing on it at all. Nor would there be any fear of the teaching being condemend as partial, or as pro-this or pro-that. God is the God of all mankind. He is *Rabbul-Alamin,* the God of all the worlds, of the East as well as of the West. He is above sex and above progeny, that He would legislate against either men or women or against one people or another. He is above want that He would legislate against either labour or capital. He is above caste, colour or creed that He could ever be partial in the matter of intercaste, intercommunal and international affairs. And could anybody or any people escape the laws of Allah by clever excuses or by

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falsehood? God is present everywhere and there is nothing that we can keep or conceal from Him. Would it not have made all the difference in the world, if prohibition in America instead of being legislated by man, had come from God? Indeed, if all the morality that we find in the world, depended upon man-made laws, and if we did not have the persuasiveness of religion influencing human conduct, we should have had a world far more barbarous, far more unjust and far more unstable than it is to-day. Religious law, supposing we could have one, would not require to be enforced. It would require no police, no army, and no state officials to back it. It would of itself grip the heads as well as the hearts of men. It would have restrained them from doing wrong long before their was time for earthly law to step in and haul over the wrong-doer.

I am convinced that even those who have lost faith in religion will welcome the prospect of the rehabilitation of religion in our personal, social and international relations. Because, though we may really have lost our faith we do regret the loss, as we know in the heart of our hearts that what religion can do for us nothing else can. It would be ever so much better, therefore, if we could really believe in religion and put ourselves under its discipline.[1]

IV

But while thus disposed, we cannot forget that some of the most acute thinkers of to-day have opined that religion cannot be acceptable to human intelligence. There are many different things that have been said in this connection. The most widely felt difficulty, however, has been pointed out by the radical, Bertrand Russell.[2] He has often told us that religion cannot appeal to man's intelligence because it asks us to believe in propositions which are not quite certain. I think it does not require a long reply, because if you asked Mr. Russell himself as to what *is* certain, he would tell you that

[1] This is supported by observations made by Walter Lippman in his *Preface to Morals*.

[2] See particularly the chapter on religion in his *Education and the Social Order*.

nearly nothing is certain. Long ago, Descartes suggested that though we could doubt our senses, and regard as uncertain the choir of heaven and the furniture of the earth, we could not possibly doubt the fact that we did doubt. The fact that we do doubt means that *we* at least exist. For how could we have doubted at all if we did not exist? However peculiar and unsatisfactory this position may appear to the ordinary man who believes not only in the certain existence of his own self, but also in the existence of the external world, and the heavens over head, it was a great concession on the part of a philosopher to make. Only hear what Bertrand Russell has to say. He thinks that Descartes did not doubt nearly enough, and that the only conclusion we are warranted in drawing from the fact of our doubting or our thinking is, *not* that we doubt and therefore that we exist, but that *it* doubts in me, and that some *thought* here and now exists, nothing more. So, you see how far we can go with philosophers. To believe that there is a world round about us, is uncertain. To believe that we exist is also uncertain. If the basic beliefs of our life are so dubious, what hope or what use can there be in trying to address ourselves to the so-called problems of civilization? It is far wiser to say good-bye to the philosopher, to withdraw from his company, and trust our common sense judgments, and address ourselves to the business in hand, that of making civilization both secure and just.

V

But there is another crop of difficulties which we must dispose of.

These come from modern psychology. But though draped in modern psychological language, they are but a repetition of the old charge levelled against divine messengers that they are insane. For unless they are so regarded Science—or perhaps it is truer to say, materialistic Science—cannot square itself with the claim that they have had direct contact with the Divine, and that what they teach is known to them to be directly true. The leader of the modern psychological attack

on religion, however, is Professor Freud. He has suggested that religion and religious experience are an illusion[1] or a projection of our own minds which we wrongly take as real, and which we will grow out of, with intellectual maturity. It is a very dangerous suggestion, but I think like all suggestions which clever people make in order to destroy religion, it may perplex us for a moment, it cannot take hold of us. A complete reply to this attack must prove too long and too technical, but I should urge on you a few general considerations which constitute, to my mind, a sufficient disproof of Freud's suggestion. First of all, we must remember that we can not dismiss the experiences of the great religious personalities only because they strike us as being unusual and out of the ordinary. We have to see, if apart from the unusual nature of their experiences, and their claims there is in the general character of the lives of these geniuses anything which smacks of an unsound or a sub-normal mind. If we ask ourselves this question we will find that far from being unsound or sub-normal these leaders of religions have each displayed, in all matters, an extraordinary degree of intelligence, balance of mind, wisdom and foresight. They have presented ethical discoveries which have proved their enormous value on the anvil of history.

Secondly, we must remember that the purpose which prophets have claimed for their advent has been to elevate humanity morally and spiritually, and in this respect they have eminently succeeded. If the historical consequences of their missions and their work had been counter or even less than what they had expected, we could have some reason to doubt the soundness of their mental equipment, but this has not been so, all of which shows that in regarding as illusions, their peculiar experiences and their equally peculiar claims, we are perhaps being shy in acknowledging with our tongues what our hearts deeply realise.

Thirdly, we are to remember that the lives and teachings of the various historical teachers of religion can be co-ordinated

[1] Freud in *The Future of an Illusion.*

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so that we could regard the outstanding founders of religions as a chain every part of which has been anticipated and, in this way, acknowledged by those that have gone before it. We can regard the different messengers, to use another metaphor, as so many beads on one string, all supporting one another.[1] It is remarkable that men who appeared under such different conditions should have given us the same account of the Divine Being. This can hardly be so, except if we believe that they proceeded from the same Divine Source.

Lastly, we must remember that the mass judgment about these personalities entirely precludes the possibility that they could be people suffering from nervous or mental disorders. Whenever such a teacher has appeared, he has had two classes of people to face. There are those who offer complete allegiance to him, and there are those who offer nothing but hostility to him. Neither allegiance nor hostility is the kind of treatment we would meet to an insane person. So, considering all these things, it seems to me that the suggestion of Freud is an after-thought, a process of 'rationalization' on the part of a clever person who in order to prove his fantastic theory, must do so or retire.

VI

We are thus brought to the position that as religion alone can save civilization, we should not be ashamed of letting religion do the task, only because certain clever people to-day are not willing to trust it. But as soon as we agree to trust religion broadly we find ourselves up against the difficulty of having to decide which of the many determinate forms of religion would suit our purpose. The difficulty is particularly embarrassing because the determinate differences between religions sometimes pertain to some of the most vital matters concerning the welfare of man. On what principle are we going to pick and choose as we obviously must, once we agree to trust and to turn to religion ? I think the difficulty only

[1] For a remarkable account of this see *A Present to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales*, by the present Head of the Ahmadiyya Movement.

arises, as long as we forget that God is a Universal God, the God of all mankind. Such a God could not but have provided for the spiritual and social uplift of different nations, and at different times. All the great religions which have raised humanity to moral and spiritual heights, and which have since left durable traditions behind them, must have been divine in origin, each having come in its time and in its place to quicken faith and action. Such differences as we find among them to-day must have crept in as human interpolations, or they must have been provided by the Divine Being Himself owing to historical or to national circumstances which they were destined to meet. Our plain duty then is to see that the last great revelation in which God revealed to mankind His Guidance and His Law, for social as well as for spiritual matters, is Islam. Let us not be disappointed if this discovery does not apparently square with the religious inheritance which we have learnt to call our own. Let us give up this habit of calling one religion mine, and another thine. Let us look for God's Own Purpose, and let us see that the same God Who sent messages to different peoples through the Hebrew prophets, through Jesus, and through the teachers known to India and China, the same God addressed all mankind through Muhammad. Let us therefore seize the teaching of Muhammad as the freshest Revelation of God's Law. Let us look trustfully at it. For if we do, we are sure to find that in social matters, in matters which make for stability and justice in civilization, as in other matters, Islam satisfies both our intelligence and our conscience. At least it has certain formal features which will commend themselves to anybody who thinks about them; and which together confer on it a very important distinction. Islam was for instance from the very beginning conceived in universal terms, terms which embrace the whole of humanity, not this or that section of it. Who will deny that any social plan which is to solve the difficulties of the world of to-day, must be conceived in terms of the whole humanity. The time has gone by when one section of humanity could be treated apart from the other sections. The world is fast becoming one. It has already become one, for all practical

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purposes and if we must save it, we must save it as a whole.

Again, a very important feature of Islam is that it does not leave social and international matters in the care only of good intentions, but provides suitable guidance for their satisfactory regulation. I think Bernard Shaw has said in one of his remarkable prefaces[1] that good intentions do not carry a grain of political science with them. They are a good thing, but they will not achieve much unless they are directed by wisdom, just as wisdom is a good thing, though it will not achieve much without good intentions.

Another great feature of Islam is that whatever it teaches is illumined for us by the certain example of its Holy Founder. Whatever he taught he himself put to practice, so that we do not have only the bare word: we also have the deed to illumine it. Perhaps it was because Islam was destined to be the last great teaching on all matters that it became from the very time of its inception the religion of a State and a Society which was able to legislate for itself. For unless it had the opportunity of interpreting its theoretical ideals in terms of practice, it would never have been such a sure guide in social and international matters, as it can prove to-day. Perhaps it was because of this that the Holy Prophet was led on to such a rich domestic life. For unless he had the opportunity to translate his own word into his own deed, we would never have known what his teaching really intended and how we could, to-day, apply that teaching to the domestic problems of our time.

VII

When we turn from the formal to the material aspects of the Muslim teaching, we find ourselves equally encouraged and braced up, even though the problems of our civilization may be ever so great. For there is not a difficulty that we are faced with to-day, which has not been provided for in the life and teaching of the Holy Prophet of Islam. Consider the

[1] *Man and Superman.*

family. The right awarded by Islam to woman to inherit, own, and manage her own property, the sanctioning of the right to divorce given to both parties, along with the healthy limits put on the exercise of that right, as also the restrictions put on the mingling of the sexes, all make for a healthy family life, both mentally and morally. Similarly the way it proposes to regulate the relations between capital and labour is conducive to harmony and to justice between these two conflicting forces of our civilization. It provides that in the fruits of capital the labourer has a share. It provides that capital should not go on accumulating in a few hands. There will have to be an annual charge on all capital. No capitalist will be able to augment his savings by charging interest on it. Nor will capital be passed on from father to son without being broken up into shares so as to provide for all the various heirs. And again the way Islam regulates international relations is wonderful. As a young man the Holy Prophet joined a League to defend the rights of the poor. The event is known in history as the Oath of the 'Fazul'. The idea was that if anybody was reported to have been wronged, the League was to fight the offender as one body. Later in his life, the Holy Prophet held up this idea as being very dear to his heart. In fact, when he had risen to be the Spiritual Leader of a small band of people in Mecca and even when he was being persecuted and dishonoured by others, as an old member of this League, he proved true to his pledge, when on one occasion a poor man approached him and wanted the payment made to him of a small debt which a great leader among the Prophet's adversaries owed to the complainant. The Prophet not minding any danger or disrespect, went straight to the leader—a sworn enemy of his—and had the debt redeemed. On another occasion two tribes went to war. The Prophet announced on the authority of Divine Revelation that, in such a case, the other tribes should together judge the point in dispute and make a just award. If this was not accepted by any party the tribes were enjoined to fight the offending party, but only to the extent of disabling

it from carrying on the fight. We here have, in essence, the ideal of a League of All Nations. Disarmament, according to Islam, would only be a half measure. It means as one brilliant writer has said that you are asking the parties to a fight, to fight not with two clubs but with one club each. Instead of disarmament you want an association of all nations determined to fight the party which does not accept the award of the league.

VIII

I cannot go into details, but I think whatever little I have said, is enough to inspire trust and confidence in Islam. No doubt, there would be things that we cannot at once understand, but if the broad teaching appears to us to be sound and healthy, it is our duty to try it out, trusting that the things we do not understand will become clear to us as we go on. Also it is possible that our disinclination to accept and to apply Muslim teaching is due to a natural disinclination to give up fashionable ways of thinking and living. But this should not stand in our way, because fashionable beliefs and fashionable institutions pass away, sooner or later, of themselves. It is much better that we change them of our own initiative, taken with care and deliberation. The duty of Muslims to interpret Muslim teaching so as to apply it to the complex problems of modern civilization is both plain and imperative, and not until they busy themselves wholeheartedly in the task, will they have discharged their obligation towards Islam and towards their time.

One last word. Will Islam—spiritual Islam let us remember—yet rise, and quicken mankind once again, to faith and action ? Will it not die away as all religion seems to be doing ? I say No. Anybody, who has any doubt on this point, need only look at the transformation which the Ahmadiyya Movement is rapidly working in the sphere both of Faith and of Works. It is indeed a remarkable regeneration that is coming through its spread. It is like the regeneration we have had on the advent of every Divine Movement. The rise of Ahmadiyyat, therefore, marks the rise not only of Islam, but of all religion.

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ISLAM IS A MISSIONARY RELIGION

(By Mr. Nazir Ahmad Bajwa, M. A.)

It is a bitter irony of fate that the religion which is based upon the principles of peace and which has never throughout its career identified social good with religious intolerance should be out of blind prejudice stigmatised as having owed its growth and expansion to coercion. There is no doubt that its followers, imbued with a new national life poured forth over three continents and founded an Empire greater than that of Rome. But the political power diminished in course of time, while the spiritual conquests of Islam went on uninterruptedly. Unaided by temporal power and utterly destitute of any political designs the Muslim missionary carried the torch of the true knowledge to the Islands of Sumatra and Malay Archipelago at a time when the Mongol hordes were sacking Baghdad and the Muslims were expelled from Cordova. Islam is and has been a missionary religion in the sense that in it the conveying of God's message to non-believers is raised to the rank of a sacred duty incumbent upon all Muslims.

Islam has been a missionary religion ever since its advent both in theory and practice. The life of the Holy Prophet which serves as a standard of conduct for the ordinary believer emphatically illustrates this point. The moment the cloud of gloom and despondency lifted from him and he became convinced of the divine mission he directed his efforts towards persuading his family to accept the message he was entrusted with. The progress of Islam during the first few years was slow ; the message of God was often greeted with scoffing and jeering. The Prophet, however, was undeterred by the little measure of success he achieved. With an increasing zeal and persistence he continued to preach his

mission heedless of the opposition from the Qureish, who viewed his prospects with dissatisfaction and hatred. The latter adopted all possible means, threats, promises, insults and offers of wordly honour to induce him to give up preaching. On one occasian they asked Abu Talib to stop his nephew from making attacks upon their ancestral religion, otherwise, they made him understand, they would resort to violence. Abu Talib who was alarmed sought out his nephew and said, " Deliver us from the evils that hang over thee and over our family." " O my uncle " replied the Prophet, " should the sun descend upon my right hand and the moon on my left to fight against me and should the alternative be presented to me of renouncing my mission or of perishing in accomplishing it, I would not waver from my purpose."

When the peaceful methods failed, the rage of the Qureish burst forth in all its fury. The new religion which was foreign to their ideas threatened not only to destroy their national worship and national religion but also to deprive them of their wealth and prestige which they as custodians of the sacred Ka'ba possessed. The Prophet had a degree of security under the protection of Abu Talib and Banu Hashim, which gave him immunity from attempts at his life. His followers, accordingly, were made the victims of the cruelest persecutions. They were imprisoned and tortured, but Islam had taken such a deep root in them that nothing succeeded in deviating them from their faith. Seeing that there was little prospect of reaction setting in, the Prophet counselled them to migrate to Abyssinia. Eleven men and five women crossed over to the strange land, but the intense hatred of the Qureish followed them even there. The Abyssinian king, however, came to their rescue by turning deaf ears to the demand of extradition made by the embassy of the Qureish. While the results of the embassy were being looked forward in Mecca with expectancy there occured the conversion of Omar who was before that one of the most powerful opponents of Islam.

Repulsed in one direction by the refusal of a prince to

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comply with their wish and robbed in the other of one of their ardent champions by the conversion of Omar, the Qureish turned their persecution into a channel still more poignant with a view to crush the movement which despite their efforts was adding daily to its strength to the great detriment of their religion, fortune and prestige. They not only intensified the rigour of the various measures they had adopted to harass the Muslims, but also placed the Banu Mattalib and the Banu Hashim under a ban, which worked with strict severity for three years.

Meanwhile the Prophet undaunted by the privations he was subjected to, pursued his mission persistently and with a zeal that set small store by the impediments placed in his way. Abu Talib, who through all the years of obloquy had stood as a wall between Mohammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him) and his enemies, had been by this time taken away. Scorned and ridiculed by his own townsmen to whom he had preached for ten years, the Prophet bent his footsteps towards Taif in the hope that he might win supporters there. But his message fell on deaf ears and he left the assembly only to encounter greater indignities from the people without who stirred by the chiefs followed him through the streets with cries and insults.

When the Prophet returned to Mecca, he found the prospects of success more helpless than ever. However at the time of Pilgrimage he came out to convey the words of God to the people and his message met with a welcome response from a small group of Medinites who were not more than a dozen. On returning to their city they invited the people to the Divine Faith and when the time of Pilgrimage again came round a deputation from Medina consisting of ten men of the Banu Khazraj and two of the Banu Aws pledged the Prophet their word to obey his teaching. From that time onwards the preaching of the faith was pushed with such a zeal and earnestness that within a year there was not a family among the Arabs of Medina that had not given some

of its members to swell the number of the Faithful with the exception of one branch of Banu Aws. The Meccans still remained obdurate and instead of relaxing the rigour of their persecution they intensified it to such an extent that the Prophet was at last compelled to order his followers to quit Mecca for Madina. He delayed his departure until a determined plot against his life warned him that further delay would be fatal.

Such is, in brief, the history of Islam from its birth to Hijrat. The missionary zeal of the Muslims which in other words was a spirit of truth, that was not satisfied until it had been conveyed to non-believers and accepted by them as such, made at last a headway in the face of formidable difficulties raised by the Quresh, who rightly or wrongly saw in the new religion a germ of destruction of their power, prestige and wealth. The Muslims patiently bore the privations and when the latter were pushed to an extent where they became utterly intolerable, the Prophet ordered his followers to migrate.

It has been frequently asserted by European writers that from the date of Mohammad's (peace and blessings of God be upon him!) flight to Medina he appeared in an entirely new character. He was no longer the preacher. He became an unscrupulous bigot, using all means of force at his disposal in the propagation of his religion. He raised the hand of extermination against all those who refused to accept his teachings and bow the knee to him.

Briefly speaking, what they say is that Islam henceforward expanded at the point of sword.

But their contention neither conforms to the teaching of Islam nor is based upon historical fact. Coercion in the matter of religion is incompatible with Islam. The Holy Quran expressly lays down that religion is not to be imposed upon the non-believers by means of force. All that the Prophet has to do is to convey the message of God clearly and emphatically;

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it depends upon the people to accept or reject it.* In the presence of unequivocal words of the Holy Quran it was impossible for the Prophet to act contrary to, and render by his own action into dead letter, the teaching he was entrusted with to impart to the people.

Coming to the region of fact we will mainly confine ourselves to the following questions.

What was the state of the Muslims after their departure from Mecca to Medina?

Were the Muslims aggressors or were they first attacked?

Was triumph of the Muslims followed by wholesale forced conversion?

Was war really an asset in the expansion of Islam or was it merely a spoke in the wheel of Islam's progress?

Great was the chargin of the Quresh, when they realised that they had not been able to bring to fruition the scheme of putting an end to the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings of God be upon him!), and this combined with the fact that the Muslims had taken refuge in another city spurred them on in their bitter hostility. While during the stay of the Muslims at Mecca they were held back from indiscriminately putting them to sword because of the fact that many followers of the Prophet were related to high families and that this event if had taken place was likely to produce adverse repercussions on some tribes, they now found all restraints removed out of their way of putting into execution their scheme of exterminating Islam, root and branch. Fully utilising the influence they possessed over other tribes in their capacity as the custodians of the sacred Kaaba, they by means of instigation raised a storm of indignation against the divine faith. Islam was in a critical position.

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* ١۔لااکراہ فی الدین

† ٢۔قل للذین اوتوا الکتاب والامیین ءاسلمتم فان اسلموا فقد اھتدوا وان تولوا فانما علیک البلاغ واللہ بصیر بالعباد

The embarrassment of the Muslims can be judged from the fact that even during the night they slept with their weapons on lest by a sudden attack they should be put to sword before having an opportunity of defending themselves*. They used to say to one another whether they would survive these calamitous times to enjoy reposeful sleep, when they would be afraid of none but God. Even in Medina itself the position of the believers was not secure. A considerable number of the porsons belonging to the tribe of Aws and Khazraj were still on the religion of their ancestors. Among the Muslims themselves were hypocrites who could be used as a useful handle by the Quresh to push their designs forward. And with this all, there was no certainty that the Jews would faithfully observe the treaty concluded with them. Such were the dangers that threatened the religion, which could only reckon upon a few hundreds among its poverty-stricken followers to draw that sword, which it is alleged, was the main weapon made use of in its expansion.

The sword of Islam was drawn not in aggression but in self-defence. "After the flight to Medina", writes Mr. Johnson in his book of "Oriental Religions", P. 596, "his followers were in great indigence and would have been put to death, but for the arms in their hands. The Koreish had sworn Mohammad's death and their army was in their field before he heard God's command to battle."

The next point to be discussed is whether the victory of the Muslims resulted in wholesale forced conversions. At the time of the conquest of Mecca, the power of the Qureish was completely broken. If force had been permissible in the conversion, this was the right opportunity for swelling the

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*لما قدم رسول الله صلعم و اصحابه المدنيته و اوتهم الانصار رمتهم العرب عن قوس واحدة و كانوا لا يبيتون الا بالسلاح ولا يصبحون الافيه وقالوا اترون انا نعيش حتى نبيت آمنين مطمئنين لا نخاف الا الله۔

number of the believers, because a slight gesture of sword would have brought countless persons within the pale of Islam. History tells us that while some persons accepted the divine faith of their own free accord, a large section of the inhabitants remained on the religion of their ancestors. The conquest of Mecca followed by an unqualified amnesty goes a long way in proving that the Prophet did not lay aside his role as a missionary and cease to invite unbelievers to accept the faith, in order to try another experiment. He never wanted war; on the other hand he strained every nerve to avoid it so long as it was possible for him. If war had been his sole aim, he would never have concluded the treaty of Hudaibiya, which offered apparently humiliating terms to Muslims unless he had been first vanquished.

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War, in fact, was an impediment in the way of the growth of Islam. From the second year of *Hijrat* to the battle of the Ditch, the believers were constantly compelled to take up arms in self-defence, and during this period which comes up to five years the numerical strength of the Muslims rose from three hundred to three thousand (the reckoning being based upon the number of Muslims that participated in war). The battle of the Ditch was followed by a period of peace which extended over a little less than two years. When peace was next disturbed, the Muslims who took part in the war were ten thousand. War thus was really a check to the progress of Islam, for it diverted the attention of the faithful from missionary propaganda,

ISLAM IN THE WEST

(By Mrs. Hidayat Budd Sadiq of Amsterdam [Holland].)

When we consider the question of Islam in the West, namely its spread in the European and American countries and the attitude of the western peoples towards this last of revealed religions, we notice that a distinct change has come over the western mind in the last 10 years.

While formerly either utter ignorance or a definite and pronounced antagonism towards Islam prevailed in Europe and America, there can now be noticed a friendlier attitude, a wish for more information. During the last ten years articles from Christian writers have appeared frequently in western newspapers and periodicals about Islam, the Muslim peoples, Muslim art, politics, etc., and it must be admitted that as a rule these articles have given proof of an earnest desire of the writers to be truthful and to discuss these subjects in an unprejudiced way.

After a careful study of the causes that have led to this remarkable change in the attitude towards Islam of the western peoples we find it to be due to two important ones. The first, though by no means the most important one, was the Great War. Since that world-catastrophe the Christian people have begun to enquire earnestly about their own religion, putting themselves searching and often cruel questions. Besides, the masses, who before the War were used to look upon the followers of other religions through the stained eye-glasses of the Christian missionary, came during and after the War in frequent personal contact with them and had ample opportunity to observe that these thousands of Asiatics and Africans were after all human beings like themselves as regards their emotions, their feelings, their aspirations and their desires; that like them

in their hearts the idea of God and of a Creator, was as vivid and that in them dwelled exactly the same feelings of love for all that is good and beautiful and dislike for bad and ugly things. All this, of course, appeared most extraordinary to the Westerners and gave rise to long and heated discussions and disputes in family circles and debating clubs. In short, the Westerners learned to look upon the followers of other creeds as human as themselves.

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It was in the fitness of things that the western peoples woke up and started in right earnest to ponder over their own religion and compare it with other faiths ; and very startling indeed was the result, for they realized that the spiritual pedestal on which they thought themselves to be standing did not exist in fact. Once this discovery was made, a critical study of their religion was taken in hand and many sincere and earnest Christian hearts became sadly disillusioned and grieved when they learnt from the books of their own learned men what all these theories and doctrines of their creed were worth ; how the doctrines of Divine Sonship and Trinity were existant long before Jesus' time in the old pagan world of Asia Minor and Persia ; how even the corner stone of their religion, the Crucifixion, was also borrowed from the pagan world, from the old Mithra mysteries, founded upon the Signs of the Zodiac. Many, then, to their sorrow, realized the truth of what once the well-known Dutch Rev. Bakels wrote, "Now we can understand why the Gospel as taught by St. Paul, was rejected by the Jews, the stern monotheists, and accepted greedily by the Pagans of Asia ; why, the latter tasted pure paganism in it."

What a marvellous change the discovery of these facts about the dogmas and doctrines of the western peoples made on their minds and how sadly they became disillusioned can better be understood than described. They realized that their belief in the death of Jesus on the Cross was

only a remnant of pagan superstitions and their doctrine of redemption through that death a mere fantasy.

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Large masses of Christians in Europe then ceased to believe in Christianity ; many of them turned away altogether from religion, but the greater part threw away the glass-stone, which they no longer considered to be of any value and started to search fervently for the precious Jewel, which, they now realized, had slipped from their hands in the course of centuries.

This search after truth is now universal in all Christian countries : some pretend to find it in their own faith ; some hope to find it elsewhere on earth ; but all are earnestly looking for it; but those who turn their hearts towards Heaven and implore God's help in their search see, at the moment of their lifting up their eyes, the Precious Jewel of God's own Religion shining before them ; and find that the Merciful God has already sent His Messenger of the Latter Days with the long sought after Jewel of true Faith, which former generations had carelessly left on the roadside, and which God had taken up to Him knowing that the world again would long and cry for it.

This yearning after Truth had hardly entered people's heart, when God raised His Messenger, Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi, the World-Teacher, whose advent all nations and creeds had expected, in order that he should give back to the Muslims pure and unadulterated Islam, which 14 centuries ago was revealed to the Master Prophet Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be with him), that he should rescue the Jews and Christians from the welter of their erroneous beliefs and superstitious practices, which had prevented them from adoring the only Adorable One ; that he should abolish definitely and for all time by his teachings all kinds of idolatry ; in short, that he should finish the work of the

Master Prophet, bringing all peoples, who have, as it were, become merged into one nation, under the fold of one religion—Islam, the religion which inculcates true submission to the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe.

It is a well-known fact that the followers of Ahmad have not only taken the message of true Islam to other Muslim brothers, but that they are also the pioneers of the preaching and spread of Islam in the Western countries. Through Allah's mercy large numbers in Europe and America have listened to their call, have examined, and tested the faith of Islam and have found it to be indeed that life-giving elixir without which there is no spiritual life.

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What is it that has made this message of Islam as taught by Ahmad's followers, spread so quickly and widely in the countries of Europe and America ? It was their giving to the western people which their own faith could not give them. Do not think we, Westerners, are unable to grasp spiritual matters ; we feel as much the need of the Light of True Religion, as any Easterner ; in this respect God's all creatures are alike. But because centuries of spiritual ignorance passed over Christendom and to us no reformer came to rectify our wrong beliefs, nor came any preacher of Islam in former days to us we became steeped in spiritual darkness and were it not for the devoted followers of Ahmad who brought us Islam, we still would be groping in ignorance.

Islam as interpreted by Ahmad gave to the searchers after truth in the West a true conception of the one God, Creator and Sustainer of all ; it took away from them the remnants of paganism, which had stayed behind in their hearts ; it abolished once and for all the incomcomprehensible idea of a Son of God, and in its stead it showed us Jesus as the Faithful Servant and Prophet of God ; it abolished the idea that a Prophet of God

could die an accursed death for our sins and that such death could bring us salvation. It was Ahmad, who taught us, drawing our attention to the experience of former peoples, that the return of Messiah was to be spiritual and that none could hope for his bodily descent from Heaven, where no bodily ascension had taken place. Did we not already doubt in our heart of hearts this material ascension and was it not our cowardliness which for long prevented us from throwing aside this belief of the days of ignorance and superstition.

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Islam, brought by Ahmad's followers to the West, is indeed a great blessing. Gone are the pagan mysterious beliefs which troubled Christian minds and peace peculiar to a Muslim believer has entered their hearts instead.

Can we then wonder that thousands in the West have joined his fold and that more still look with increasing sympathy towards Islam ?

Surely, he was the Mahdi who was to come, for he broke the Cross ; surely, he was the Messiah to come, for in breaking this Cross under which the Christian world was staggering, he took off from them their burden and made light their yoke.

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COMPANIONATE DIVORCE.

(By Maulvi Muhammad Din, B.A., Late Muslim Missionary in America.)

Jesus declared that marriage once made could never be unmade. No man could put away his wife unless she had fornicated. In support of his declaration he said that no man had a right to sever what heaven had united. Moses being cited against him he said that it was under unusual circumstances that Moses did allow them to put away their wives, but from the beginning it was not so. To cap this astonishing statement he said that whoever of the parties married any third person is guilty of adultery. For nineteen hundred years this law has been on the statute books of the Christian countries and during this whole period it has caused untold amount of suffering. There have been those who have insisted from the very beginning that there is a necessary corollary to the verdict of Jesus that those whom God wanted to keep separate should never have been united, and that those whom God wanted to unite should never have been separated under the so-called Christian ban. Hundreds of millions of people have carried on their natural, albeit illegal according to Jesus, relations in every age, and billions of children, lawful in every sense, have been dubbed illegal and illegitimate in every generation. Now who is responsible for all this? None but him who said that once married in Church, people were united for better or for worse and there was to be no going back upon it. The most a person could do was to live separately without contracting any further marital tie. That is at least the Roman Catholic point of view. The Protestants hold that the knot could be cut by a court if the opposite party, with or without the consent of the other party, could prove that it had been guilty of adultery. The man or woman must be proved to have had illegal relations with another

person. Now what happens in the Western countries is that if both parties are willing to separate one of them gets himself caught in the very act or alternatively the other party tries to prove that the person had been guilty of such and such an act under such and such a circumstance. Dirty linen is washed in public and all sorts of scandals are raked up to the disgust of decent folk.

Now such a state of things could not be tolerated, hence some of the Western nations have had to enact that it was not merely adultery but incompatibility of all sorts that would be a valid reason for separation. Again courts had to be resorted to and though there was not so much scandal as at first, yet all sorts of vile charges are made public and many careers ruined. Moreover there has, of late, been so much laxity in the matter of securing divorce that life-long partners put each other away on trivial excuses. All this confusion is due, in the first place, to that short-sighted pronouncement which did not take human nature into consideration. Ethics are mere ribaldry if they cut themselves adrift from human nature and its workings. Christianity is a case in point. It suppressed nature and now nature is sweeping it away. Out of every seven marriages in America one is a divorce and the rate is increasing daily. Sensible people have taken alarm. All kinds of remedies are proposed and then given up after a little trial. One of the latest in this direction is what is called *Companionate Divorce*. Judge Harrison Ewing of the Cleveland (United States of America) Divorce Court tells the parties that *they should return home for the sake of their children but live apart*, that is, man is to be the financing manager and woman the managing house-keeper for the family. It is said that the scheme has successfully stood its first test, for a reconciliation has been brought about.

We are glad that Christendom is slowly but surely coming round to the Islamic idea of marriage. Now everywhere it is recognised that marriage is not an indissoluble

sacrament but a sacred contract which may be put an end to, however regrettable the step might be, if there is no chance of the parties pulling on together. Realising the gravity of such a step and its inevitableness in certain circumstances Islam had hedged it round in such a way, as to lead it more in the direction of conciliation than in the abrupt breaking up of home or scandalising the society. In the first place the parties must live together under the same roof on the best of terms for a period of about three months. If during these three months they once come together or have any conjugal relation, off goes the divorce and they must begin again if they are recalcitrant. That is the main point. And that is resorted to in case the preliminary steps have fallen through. For instance before the declaration of divorce it is necessary that good people on both sides should do their best to bring about reconciliation. If it fails then the parties can seek divorce; husband and wife both have equal rights, but the wife in the case of her rights being prejudiced, can have recourse to the law courts, not to give vent to slander, but merely to safeguard her rights and the rights of her off-spring. Now if Europe and America want to get out of the rut they have struck into, they must take leave of Christianity and openly declare for Islam, otherwise they will have no social or domestic peace.

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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Islam in Madagascar

Madagascar, the third largest island in the world has a population estimated at over three million souls. Amongst these 669,200 are Muslims, that is, eighteen per cent. of the total. The great majority of the other natives are animists. The Malagasies, as the natives of Madagascar are called, have been classified by ethnologists into two groups :—

(*a*) Malayan, and (*b*) African. The former includes the dominant race of light-coloured Hovas and other tribes such as the Betsileo and the Betsimaraka ; the latter are the dark, negroid Sakalava. Various other tribes like the Taimoro, Tanasi and Tamosi are mixtures of these two stocks ; while there are extensive coast settlements of Suahelis, Arabs and Indians.

Madagascar and its dependencies the Comoro Islands are divided into three groups :—

1. The Comoro natives (109,605), who are all fervent Muslims, together with their half-converted clients of the coast.

2. The Sakalava of the north-east and west (numbering 209,000 Muslims).

3. The South Eastern tribes in the provinces of Farafangana, Mananjora, Fort Dauphin and Betroka (253,000 Muslims).

The entire populace of the Comoro Isles are Muslims of the Shaf'i sect, whose common language is Suaheli. This group is composed of four islands named Angazija, Anzhnan, Mayota and Moheli, which have been ruled by separate sultans since the sixteenth century. Ferrand thinks that Islam was introduced into

Madagascar by the following three waves of Muslim migration :—

(1) The arrival of Arabs in the sixth to the ninth centuries when numbers of the natives were converted to Islam.

(2) Persians of the Shi'a sect of the "Twelvers" (Ithna 'Ashariya) arrived after the reign of 'Ali-al-Rida (800—818 A. D.).

(3) Arrival of other Arabs in the reign of the last Abbasid Caliph Al-Musta'sim, about the middle of the 13th century.

He also enumerates the borrowings of the Malagasies from Arabic sources as follows :—

(1) The names of the days of the week.

(2) The names of the twelve months, which reproduce the Arabic names of the Zodiac.

(3) The names of the 28 days of the month (lunar), which resemble the Arabic names of the mansions of the moon.

(4) The great annual festival of the *fandruana* or the bath, corresponding to the *'Id-ul-Fitr* of the Muslims.

In mordern times, according to the *Moslem World* the Ahmadiyya Movement and the Ishma'ilis have endeavoured to extend Islamic missionary influence in the island. From the selfless zeal and the intelligent and organised manner in which the Ahmadiyya community is working we are sure the time is not very far when the remotest corners of the earth will effectively feel the effect of the Muslim missionary spirit.

The Bible in Muslim Lands

According to a report of the British and Foreign Bible Society there was no decline in Scripture sales in the lands that are predominantly Muslim :

"In our Egypt Agency, says the report, which comprises the Anglo-Egyptia Sudan, Abyssinia, Palestine, Syria and Cyprus, as well as Egypt, the sales were the highest on record ; 166,740 volumes in unity-five languages. Of the

Scriptures in classical Arabic, the sacred language of Islam, 101,000 copies were dispensed and 5,600 in the colloquial Arabic of Egypt. The colporteurs carried these volumes far and wide. One of them visited a Bedouin camp of 3,000 tents in Syria and sold a Bible to the Sheikh, who confessed that he had never heard of Jesus Christ. In the countries lying between Egypt and the Atlantic close upon 70,000 books were distributed among the heterogeneous population. The Society's motor caravan travelled 5,650 miles in districts fringing the great desert, and for every mile it went a copy of the Scriptures came into the possession of an inhabitant. Colporteurs reached places far away in the Atlas region of Morocco, which had probably never been previously visited by Bible-sellers. The political changes of recent years are making it more easy for the Society's workers to place the Scriptures in the hands of Turks in and around Constantinople. The reaction against Arabic elements in the Turkish language, and changes in the language itself, have rendered necessary a revision of the Osmanli version and the reprinting of it in Roman characters. Almost 60,000 volumes of Scripture were distributed in Persia and Iraq, mostly by the colporteurs, and this was considerably in advance of previous figures."

For the past fifty years or so the British and Foreign Bible Society has been distributing annually free of charge hundreds of thousands of the copies of the Bible in Muslim lands and its officials have been constantly telling the world that the Bible is being purchased and read in these lands with increasing zeal and fervour. But the tangible results produced by this wholesale diffusion and dissemination of the Bible in Muslim countries are very disappointing even for the most optimistic evangelist. The distribution of the copies of the Bible among the Bedouins of Syria and Iraq and to the primitive peoples living in regions very remote from civilization must not be taken to mean that it is, or ever was, popular with them. It demonstrates only one thing—the unlimitedness of the resources in men and money of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Had those organisations which are busy spreading the teaching of Islam—the most active and best organised admittedly among them being the Ahmadiyya community—possessed even a tithe of the vast resources at the disposal of the Bible Society the religious world would have witnessed a marvellous spectacle. By this time Islam would have penetrated the most distant and unknown regions of the globe. Its appeal to human mind, indeed, is infinitely more powerful than that of the faith of Jesus Christ.

What is the Meaning of Life

Mr. Will Durant who is well-known in America for his philosophical writings recently wrote a letter to 'many people of various callings, all far up on the ladder of life and most of them of an age when they can look back to discover whether life has any meaning beyond the immediate desire for bread and butter and a place to sleep,' in which he asked them the following interesting question :

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> "Tell me what keeps you going, what helpif— any— religion gives you, what are the sources of your inspiration and your energy, what is the motive-force of your toil, where you find your consolation and your happiness, where in the last resort, your treasure lies."

Replies came from such people as Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, Gandhi, Sinclair Lewis, Charles A. Beard, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Havelock Ellis, H. L. Mencken, Adolp S. Ochs, Andre Manrois, Abb Ernest Dimnet and many other noted persons. We give below very briefly the answers given by some of them which we are sure will interest our readers very much. Andre Manrois writes :

> "I go on working for the same reason that a hen goes on laying eggs. There is in every living creature an obscure but powerful impulse to active functioning. Never in my adult life have I experienced anything that could be plausibly called a religious impulse. Life has no meaning. But I find it amusing while it lasts and when I die I will be content to vanish into nothingness. No show, however good, could conceivably be good for ever."

Charles A. Beard, eminent historian, sociologist, and economist says :

> "As I look over the grand drama of history I find amid the apparent chaos and tragedy, evidence of law and plan and immense achievement of the human spirit in spite of disasters. I am convinced that the world is not a mere bog in which men and women trample themselves in the mire and die. Something magnificent is taking place here amid the cruelties and tragedies, and the supreme challenge to intelligence is that of making the noblest and best in our curious heritage prevail.

"If there was no grand design in the beginning of the universe, fragments of one are evident, and mankind can complete the picture. A knowledge of the good life is our certain philosophic heritage, and technology has given us a power over nature which enables us to provide the conditions of the good life for all the earth's multitudes. That seems to me to be the most engaging possibility of the drama, and faith in its potentialities keeps me working at it even in the worst hours of disillusionment. The good life—an end in itself to be loved and enjoyed ; and intelligent labour directed to the task of making the good life prevail. There is the little philosophy, the circle of thought, within which I keep my little mill turning."

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Gandhi observes :—

"Life for me is real, as I believe it to be a spark of the Divine. Religion not in the conventional but in the broadest sense helps me to have a glimpse of the Divine essence. This glimpse is impossible without full development of the moral sense. Hence religion and morality are, for me, synonymous terms. Striving for full realization keeps me going. This strife is the source of whatever inspiration and energy I possess. The goal is already stated. My consolation and my happiness are to be found in service of all that lives, because the Divine essence is the sum total of all life. My treasure lies in battling against darkness and all forces of evil."

Adolph S. Ochs, president and publisher of the New York *Times* observes :—

"I found pleasure in work that came to my hand, and in doing it conscientiously ; I found joy and satisfaction in being helpful to my parents and others, and in this making my life worthwhile found happiness and consolation. My Jewish home life and religion gave me a spiritual uplift and a sense of responsibility to my subconscious self—which I think is the God within me, the Unknowable, the Inexplicable. This makes me believe I am more than an animal, and that this life can not be the end of our spiritual nature."

India in 1921 and 1931

The area of the Indian Empire is according to the latest estimate 1,808,679 sq. miles. The population returned at the census is 352,837,778 showing a rise of 10·6 per cent. since 1921. The number of males is now 181,828,923 and females 171,008,855 giving a proportion of 940 females per 1,000 males. The mean

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density per square mile in the whole of India is 195 varying from a maximum of 814 in Cochin State, and in British India of 646 in Bengal, to a minimum of 5 in the Baluchistan States and 9 in British Baluchistan.

The decade was one generally free from pestilence, plague or famine in India as a whole, with the result that the growth of the population has been comparable to that in the last similar decade 1881—1891, when the natural rate of increase was 9·6 per cent.

The urban population is now 11·0 per cent of the total, an addition of 0·9 per cent. in this population since 1921.

The number per mile of the population of India aged five and over who can read and write any language is males 156, females 29, the corresponding proportions (of all ages) in 1921 having been males 122 and females 18, and in 1881 males 81 and females 3. The proportion of literates in English is males·25 and females 3 per mile of 20 years and over only. The total literate population of India including children is 23,962,279 males and 4,169,036, females. The corresponding figures in 1901 were 14,690,080 and 996,341. The total illiterate population in 1931 was 156,243,305 males and 165,384,698 females.

There are some 225 languages, exclusive of dialects, spoken in the Indian Empire, about 150 of which are confined to Assam and Burma.

With three exceptions the aggregate of speakers of any one of the indigenous groups comes to not less than 2 millions. At least 20 different scripts are employed in writing these languages, the two most important being Urdu and Nagri; Bengali, Telugu and Tamil follow in that order in point of numbers of users; how many use Modi (the Marathi script) is not certain. For Burma the Burmese is the only vernacular script of any importance. Speakers (by mother tongue) of languages foreign to India recorded at the census of 1931 numbered 646,535, the number of English speakers being 319,312.

The proportion in the population returned under the main

religions, and the variations since 1921 are as following :—

	Proportion per 1,000 of population.	Percentage of increase or decrease in actual number since 1921.
Hindu ...	... 682	+10·4
Muslim ...	.. 222	+13·0
Buddhist ...	.. 36	+10·5
Tribal Religions ...	.. 24	—15·3
Christian ...	... 18	+32·5
Others ...	.. 18	+38·0

The following table shows Muslim population in India and in each of its several provinces.

	Total Pop.	Hindus	Moslems	Christians	Sikhs
All India	352,986,876	238,330,912	77,743,928	5,961,794	4,306,432
Bengal	50,122,550	21,537,921	27,530,321	180,572	
Bihar-Orissa	37,676,576	31,010,660	4,264,776	341,710	
Bombay	21,854,841	16,619,866	4,457,133	317,042	
Burma	14,645,269	574,697	606,841	(not given)	
Cen. Prov.	15,507,723	13,460,105	682,854	50,584	
Coorg	163,337	148,907	13,777	3,430	
Delhi	636,249	399,863	209,960	16,989	
Madras	46,575,670	40,392,790	3,316,082	1,770,329	
N.-W. F. P.	2,425,076	142,977	2,227,303	12,213	42,510
Punjab	23,580,853	6,328,588	13,332,460	414,788	3,064,144
United Prov.	48,408,763	40,905,523	7,181,927	205,009	

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The case for Filipino Independence.

The Americans are very proud of their democratic institutions. They call their country " the land of the brave and the free". It was an American President who added to the world's political vocabulary a really beautiful phrase—self-determination for all peoples. Uncle Sam has always sympathised with, and given moral help to, subject nations and communities in their struggle to free themselves from the yoke of foreign bondage. Yet America holds in bondage a people who passionately desire independence for their country. Senator Hawes is convinced by his experiences in the Philippines that the Filipinos practically without exception possess an intense and irrepressible desire to see their country completely free from American influence. Hawes is positively of the opinion that the Filipinos are quite fit to take charge of their homes and hearths. He is joint author of a bill which seeks to give complete independence to the Filipinos and which will very shortly be discussed by the American Congress. We hope America will see the incongruity between its words and deeds and give freedom to a people who passionately desire it and are eminently fitted to properly exercise it.

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* NOTES ON THE HOLY QURAN

Suratul-Baqrah—II

ختم اللہ علی قلوبہم وعلی سمعہم۔ وعلی ابصارہم غشاوۃ ولہم عذاب عظیم۔

8. *Khatam allāhu 'alā qulúbi him wa 'alā sam'i-him wa 'alā abṣāri-him ghishāwah, wa la-hum 'adhābun 'aẓīm.*

8. Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering; and for them is a great punishment.

23. (*a*) This verse refers to the disbelievers described above as absolutely indifferent to truth. They refused to employ their hearts, eyes and ears for the comprehension of truth; as a punishment, their hearts and ears were sealed, and a covering came to envelop their eyes and this is a punishment which is quite in agreement with what we observe in the physical world. Our powers or faculties, when not in use for a long time, become wholly useless. The eyes lose their power of sight, if they are not used for a long time; and so our limbs get shrunk and dwindled for the same reason. Some of the Hindu gymnosophists keep one of their arms in continued disuse for a long time, and as a result, the arm gets atrophied. It was in just conformity with this inexorable law of nature that the ill-natured infidels lost their faculty of faith, because they refused to make use of it in seeking and approaching the truth which the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) presented before them. This faculty of research and

* Under this heading will continue to appear regularly in every issue of the *Review of Religions* explanatory notes on the Holy Quran. These "notes" will comprise translation and detailed and comprehensive explanation of the Quranic verses, beginning with Sura-tul-Fatiha and will be written by the famous writer and theologian, Maulana Sher Ali, B. A., aided and helped by the *dars* of the Quran which the persent Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, has been giving from time to time at Qadian. In this way, we hope, by the grace of God, to bring out, in due conrse, a complete and exhaustive commentary of the Quran.—*Ed.*

enquiry has for its organs mind, ears and eyes, and because these were left inactive for a long time, they became absolutely inert and useless, through the operation of natural laws of God; for God Himself is the controller of this system of causes and effects, and indeed every cause is followed by its effect under His supreme will. Hence, it is only the natural effect of the wilful indifference of disbelievers that is described in the words, "Allah has set a seal on their hearts and their ears, and over their eyes is a covering." It is, therefore, a mistake to read into the verse the entirely unwarrantable meaning that as God had sealed their hearts, therefore, they could not believe. The sequence, as set forth in the verse, is clear. The infidels persisted in the disuse of their faculties which, in consequence, got sealed up against the truth.

This interpretation is corroborated by other verses of the Holy Quran; for instance بل طبع الله عليها بكفرهم (النساء ع ٢٢). "Nay, but Allah has sealed them (their hearts) on account of their disbelief." (IV, 156). Again:—

كلا بل ران على قلوبهم ما كانوا يكسبون (التطفيف)

"Nay, but that which they used to do has covered their hearts". (LXXXIII, 15.)

Abu Huraira states:—"The Holy Prophet said: When a man commits a sin, a black spot is formed on his heart. He again commits a sin, and another black spot in formed on his heart, and so on until his whole heart is blackened and that is the covering of which the Holy Qurān speaks in the verse 'Nay, but that which they used to do has covered their hearts'." (Ibn-i-Jarīr.)

Huzaifa is reported by Muslim to have narrated a similar saying of the Holy Prophet (*vide* Muslim, Kitābul-Fitan).

The heart, the eye and the ear in the verse under

comment indicate those spiritual organs for discerning the truth.

Another point worth noting in connection with this verse is that in the case of the 'ear' and the 'heart' the word used is *Khatama* (sealed) while in the case of 'eyes' the Holy Qurān uses the word 'covering'. The reason for this distinction is that the 'ear' and the 'heart' are under greater control of the disbeliever than the eye. He can, if he chooses, lend a deaf ear to the preaching of the divine messenger. Similarly, he can shut up his heart against his message and refuse to consider it. But such is not the case with the eyes. Sometimes God shows such terrible signs that the disbeliever is compelled to take cognizance of them whether he will or not. Hence, in the case of the 'heart' and the 'ear' the stronger word 'sealed' has been used, but in the case of the 'eyes', the Holy Qurān uses the less strong word 'covering', which may sometime be removed, and the disbeliever may be made to see the truth of the divine messenger in spite of his hatred and hostile attitude. This happens when God shows some mighty signs in support of His messenger. Thus the eye is sometimes not under the control of the disbeliever, and therefore through the medium of the eye he does somtimes see the truth of God's messenger in which case the 'covering' is removed, though temporarily. But he can exercise greater control over his ears and can close them against the voice of the divine messenger. Similarly, he can refuse to ponder over the claims of a prophet, and thus shut the door of his heart against the truth. Hence truth does not find access to him either through his ears or through his heart, and therefore both these avenues are spoken of as 'sealed'. But he does sometimes see the truth by means of his eyes and therefore in the case of the eyes the Holy Qurān uses the word 'covering' which is not as strong a barrier against truth as a 'seal' is, for it is a thing which is capable of being occasionally removed.

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In one verse of the Holy Qurān, (XVI, 109) even the eyes are spoken of as having been sealed by God, but that verse refers to the infidels who have opened their bosoms to infidelity (XVI, 107). Such infidels take delight in disbelief and are confirmed in it, while the verse under comment refers to disbelievers who are only blind followers of their forefathers. Hence, in the case of the disbelievers of the former class, even the eyes have been declared as sealed up, for there is no chance of their seeing the truth; while in the case of the latter class of disbelievers the eyes have been spoken of, not as sealed up, but only under a covering, because in their case there is a possibility of their occasionally getting a glimpse of the truth.

(*b*) '*Adhāb*' (punishment) lit. signifies 'to prevent, to withhold, to restrain'. عذبه عن الامر 'Adhaba-hū-'anil-amr means "*He prevented him or restrained him from doing the thing, or, affair*" اعذب نفسک عن الکذا *A'dhib nafsa-ka 'anil-kadhā* means *withhold or restrain thyself from such a thing.* (Lane's Lexicon, p. 1981.)

Thus عذاب عظیم *'adhābun 'aẓīm* means "to be prevented from seeing God for a long time," and there can be no punishment greater than this.

RUKŪ' 2

ومن الناس من يقول آمنا بالله وباليوم الاخر وما هم بمومنين۔

9. *Wa minan-nāsi man-yaqúlu āman-nā billāhi wa bil yau-mil-ākhiri wa ma hum bi mu'minīn.*

9. And of these people there are some who say: We believe in Allah and in the last day! while they are not believers at all.

24. (*a*) Besides the believers and disbelivers there is another class of men which invariably springs up along with the supporters and opposers, when a mighty dispensation is set on foot. This is the class of hypocrites. Those

who have neither the courage to oppose openly nor the sense to decide for themselves maintain their connection with both sides and try to please both. We are informed of these people in verses 9 to 21.

(*b*) From the verse under comment we learn that the class of hypocrites referred to in this verse profess to be Muslims. Belief in God is the first item of faith, while belief in the last day is the last item of faith. Here only the first and the last item have been mentioned, but the intervening items are included. This is just as we mention the first and the last thing of a series and insert dots between the two, thus indicating that the whole series is meant. That the hypocrites professed to believe in all the doctrines of Islam is clear from the fact that in the next verse we are told that they tried to deceive the Muslims which they could do only by professing their faith in all the Muslim doctrines, and not merely in God and the last day.

A belief in God and the day of judgment should not be considered to suffice for the salvation of man. They are respectively the first and final points of the whole doctrinal and practical ground. The sphere of doctrine and practice begins with the belief in the existence of God and ends with the belief in the day of judgment, after which the actions of this life come to an end, and time for retribution commences. Hence, a belief in the existence of God and the day of judgment covers all those principles of religion which are essential for a Muslim, as well as all rules of conduct which become binding upon man when he comes to have belief in God, and for which he expects reward on the day of judgment.

يخادعون الله و الذين آمنو وما يخدعون الا انفسهم و مايشعرون۔

10. *Yukẖādi'ú nal-lāha wal-laḏẖina āmanú wa māyakẖdā-'úna illā anfusa-hum wa mā yash-urūn.*

10. They strive to deceive Allah and those who

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believe, but they deceive none but themselves; only they perceive it not.

25. (*a*) The words يخادعون *Yukẖādi'úna* and يخدعون *Yakhda'úna* in this verse, although derived from a common root, are different in significance. The translators of the Holy Qurān, failing to grasp the difference between the meanings of these words, have entirely mistranslated the verse. We find in Kulliyāt-i-Abul Baqā (p. 164)

يقال خادع اذا لم يبلغ مراده وخدع اذا بلغ مراده

i. e. "The word خادع *Khāda'a* (from which *Yukhādi'úna* has been formed) is used when the deceiver is not successful in his attempt at deception, and *Khada'a* (from which *Yakhda'úna* has been formed) when the party intended by the deceiver to be deceived falls a victim to the deception." The above distinction is corroborated by Lane in his Arabic-English Lexicon, p. 709. He says "One says of a man خادع *Khāda'a* when he has not attained his desire and خدع *Khada'a*, when he has attained his desire." Accordingly, the verse means that the hypocrites attempt to deceive God and the believers but the latter are not affected by their deception (God cannot be affected by their treachery because He knows all their secrets beforehand; and the believers escape their fraud because God forewarns them against their evil designs); but by these attempts at deception, their ownselves are deceived, because they are deluded into the idea that, by acting deceitfully, they become safe, while, in fact, they are thus paving the way for their own ruin.

Here it should not be understood that the hypocrites actually wish to deceive God, for one who believes in God cannot even think of deceiving Him, because deception can conceivably be planned against one who is ignorant, but believers in God believe Him to be all-knowing; so their attempting to deceive God does not mean that they wilfully try to deceive Him, but, as common in the Arabic language,

the word يخادعون *Yukhād-i-'úna* is used here in a figurative and not a literal sense. It signifies that the hypocrites appear to act deceitfully, because when two actions are similar, the word for one can be used to denote the other, although the word may not convey exactly the same meaning. Here also it is told of the hypocrites that they outwardly professed Islamic doctrines although their hearts cherished contrary views. This they did only to share the benefits which were to fall to the lot of the Muslims. But the progress of the Muslims depended upon the grace of God who knew all the hidden secrets of the heart. Consequently, though their action was not the outcome of a desire to deceive God, yet it was quite like deception; hence the word 'deception' has been used for it. The figurative sense of this word is made further clear by a reference to the word *ishtira* (purchase) used in verse 17 to connote the barter of error for guidance affected by the unbelievers, although the action is not actually a commercial transaction.

The word from which the verbs *Yukhādi'una* and *Yakhda'úna* have been formed have other significations also which may be applied here. *Ibnul A'rabi,* as quoted by *Tha'lab*, says:— الخداع الفساد *i. e. Khida'* means *corruption.* (Fathul- Bayan). Hence يخادعون الله *Yuhhāi'u-nal-lāha* means يخالفون الله "they resist or oppose Allah" or it means يفسدون في دين الله 'They work corruption in the religion of Allah."

Again خداع *Khida'* also signifies *prevention* (منع). You say كان فلان يعطى ثم خدع "Such a one used to give, but he withheld himself *i. e.* he refrained or refused." (Tajul-Arus, Lisan-ul-'Arab, Ṣiḥāh Jauhari.) Following this signification, the sentence would mean "They strive to prevent the religion of Allah from spreading, but by doing so, they only withhold good from their ownselves. They cannot check the spread of the faith."

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Similarly, the word also means to be 'variable'. They say سوق خادعة "A market varying or variable in its state, at one time being brisk, and at another dull, in respect of traffic (Tajul-'Arūs). Following this signification يخادعون الله *Yukhādi'u-nal-lāha* would mean "They are variable with respect to Allah, believing at one time and disbelieving at another."

It is noteworthy that in the verse under comment, only Allah and the believers have been named and no mention has been made of the Holy Messenger of God. Instead of saying "They strive to deceive Allah and His Messenger," the Holy Quran only says "They strive to deceive Allah." The reason of this apparent omission is that the name of the Messenger of God is included in the word 'Allah'. They began to oppose the Messenger of God only after he had announced himself to be God's messenger and began to do the work that had been entrusted to him by God. Hence the opposition to the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) was really opposition to God. Hence when the Holy Qurān says 'They strive to deceive Allah,' it includes the Holy Prophet in the word Allah.

فی قلوبهم مرض فزادهم الله مرضاً ولهم عذاب اليم- بما كانوا يكذبون-

11. *Fi qulūbi-him maraḍum fa-zāda-humul-lāhu maraḍā wa lahum adhābun alīmum bimā kānu yakdhibūn.*

11. In their hearts there is a disease, and that disease has Allah increased to them; and for them is a grievous punishment because they lied.

26 (*a*) God speaks of two diseases of the heart, (1) disbelief (2) hypocrisy. The former kind of disease has already been referred to in verses 7 & 8. So the word مرض *Maraḍ* in this verse means the disease of hypocrisy.

The aggravation of the disease by God means that He continued to add to the prosperity of the Muslims and to the ordinances of the Muslim law, which led the hypocrites to

go from bad to worse. The aggravation of the disease is attributed to God, because it was He who granted prosperity to the Muslims and amplified the law for them which was the cause of the increase of their disease.

عذاب اليم *'adhābun alīm'* 'grievous punishment' is the mental anguish from which the hypocrites suffered at seeing the growing prosperity of the Muslims. The disbelievers openly gave vent to their ill-feelings, but the hypocrites kept their hatred and malice against the Muslims pent up in their hearts. Hence their mental anguish was more grievous than that of the disbelievers.

How the hypocrites suffered from mental pain may be judged from the case of Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the head of the hypocrites at Medina. On one occasion during the expedition against the tribe of Banu Mustaliq, there occurred a quarrel between two persons, one of whom was a refugee from Mecca and the other an inhabitant of Medina. Thereupon the chief of the hypocrites exclaimed, "When we shall return to Medina, the most honoured one will drive out therefrom the most despised one", meaning that on return to Medina he (the most honoured one) would drive therefrom the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him) whom he called "The most despised one."

The Holy Companions could not bear to hear such words used about the Holy Prophet, and his own son came to the Holy Prophet and asked his permission to cut off the head of his father with his own hand. The Holy Prophet pardoned the man, but imagine the pain which must have wrung the heart of Abdullah at seeing that his own son had prepared to cut off his head and that for the sake of the man whom he so deeply hated.

(*b*) بما كانوا يكذبون 'Because they lied.' The hypocrites

were outwardly with the Muslims, but their hearts were with the disbelievers. They were always busy devising plans to conceal their disbelief, and for this purpose they had constantly to take recourse to simulation and lying. They suffered from heart-burnings not only at the time when the Muslims were victorious but also at the time when victory chanced to fall to the lot of the disbelievers, because they were not with them to share the fruits of victory.

A hypocrite can never be happy in the true sense of the word and always remains in trouble in consequence of his lying habits. The hypocrites of the Holy Prophet's days could not likewise enjoy happiness.

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واذا قيل لهم لا تفسدوا فى الارض۔ قالوا انما نحن مصلحون۔ الا انهم هم المفسدون ولكن لا يشعرون۔

12. *Wa idha qīla la-hum lā tufsidū fil-arḍāi qālū inna mā naḥnu muṣliḥūn O 13. Alā innahum humul mufsidūna wa lākil la yash'urūn.*

12. And when it is said to them: 'Create not disorder in the earth', they say:—'We are only promoters of peace 13. Now surely it is they who are the creators of disorder, but they perceive it not.'.

27. The hypocrites tried to create disturbances in two ways. *Firstly*, they urged the Jews and the pagans to fight with the Muslims. *Secondly*, they tried to sow discord among Muslims themselves. To these activities of theirs we find clear references in the Holy Qurān. For instance, we read in Chapter LIX, 12:—"Hast thou not considered those who play the hypocrites, who say to their brethren who have disbelieved among the people of the Book, 'If you be turned out, we will assuredly go forth with you; and we will never obey any one concerning you; and if you be warred against, we will surely help you'."

In these verses it is mentioned that the hypocrites were secretly exciting the Jews against the Muslims and were provoking them to war against the Muslims by repeated assurances of their own help.

As to their attempt to sow discord among the Muslims, the Holy Quran says:—"They it is who say, expend not *money* on those who are with the messenger of Allah, so that they may disperse.....They say, if we return to the city, the more honourable will assuredly drive forth from it the meaner." (LXIII, 8, 9)

In this passage God mentions two noteworthy practices of the hypocrites. Firstly, it was usual with them to induce the men of Medina not to help the poor Muslims (who, compelled by the enemies of Islam, had forsaken their homes and come over to Medina along with the Holy Prophet) so that they might be scattered. Secondly, they, in order to undermine the prestige of the Holy Prophet (may peace and blessings of God be upon him!) posed as men of influence and said that they would turn out the Holy Prophet.

A well-known incident narrated in authentic traditions will serve to illustrate the above statement. It is related that on the occasion of the battle of the Banu Mustaliq, there was a quarrel between a *Muhajir* (one of the emigrants) and an *Ansari* (one of the helpers, *i.e.*, those men of Medina who gave shelter to the emigrants), and their respective friends came to their aid. Availing himself of the opportunity, Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, the chief of the hypocrites, began to excite the company of the *Ansar*, saying, "Those homeless strangers whom we gave refuge are now quarrelling with us. The more honourable (meaning himself) will surely drive forth from Medina the meaner (meaning the Holy Prophet, may peace and blessings of God be upon him!)". But his words had no effect upon those

whose hearts were full of faith, and they, instead of falling a prey to his machinations, rebuked him ; even his own son stood up to defy him.

By such means were the hypocrites trying to sow dissension and discord among the Muslims and their foes. Whenever they were asked why they acted like that they evaded the question with the make-believe that they were prompted by nothing but sincerity of purpose and that their intention was not to create ill-will but to establish mutual cordiality, and that those things they did only from a consideration of expediency.

واذا قيل لهم آمنوا كما آمن الناس قالوا انؤمن كما آمن السفهاء الا انهم هم السفهاء ولكن لا يشعرون-

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14. Wa idhā qīla la hum āminú kamā āmanan-nāsu qālú a-nu minu kamā āmanas-sufahā alā inna hum humus-sufāhā'u wa lākil-lā ya'lamún.

14. And when it is said to them: 'Believe ye as others have believed'; they say: Shall we believe as the light-witted have believed? Now surely it is they that are the light-witted, but they know it not.

28. سفهاء *Sufahā'* is the plural of سفيه *Safih* which has a double significance (1) Simple, light-witted, (2) incapable of managing one's property well. We read the word in the latter sense in the following verse of the Holy Quran (النساء ع) ولا تؤتوا السفهاء اموالكم "And give not to the light-witted your possessions", *i.e.*, those who cannot protect their possessions and prove themselves to be spendthrift should not be entrusted with any property. (IV, 6)

The Arabic idiom سفه الشراب *Safihash-sharāba*, according to the *Lisānul Arab* (Vol. 18, p. 393) means, "He exceeded in the use of the beverage", and سفه الماء *Safihal mā'a* according to Lane's *Arabic-English Lexicon*, means, "he

drank the water immoderately". The hypocrites called the true Muslims *Sufahā'*, because, in their opinion, they (the hypocrites) could protect their property by maintaining friendly relations with the disbelievers, whereas the Muslims, on account of their rigid aloofness from the disbelievers, were exposing their possessions to insecurity ; and, moreover, the Muslims were, according to them, guilty of lavish expenditure for religious purposes. God replies to these imputations, saying that, in the long run, the hypocrites will witness the ruin of their possessions, whereas the Muslims will succeed ; but the hypocrites do not know it. Here God uses the word لا يعلمون (do not know) because in this verse God speaks of something which is to come to pass in the future.

وإذا لقوا الذين آمنوا قالوا آمنا. وإذا خلوا إلى شيا طينهم قالو إنا معكم إنما نحن مستهزون-

15. Wa idhā laqul-ladhīna āmanú qālú āmannā wa idhā khalau ila shayāṭīni him qālú innā ma'a kum, inna mā naḥnu mustahziún.

15. And when they meet those who believe, they say, 'We believe'; but when they are alone with their ringleaders, they say, 'We are certainly with you ; we were but jesting'.

29. The word 'ringleaders' (*shayāṭīn*) alludes to the jews with whom the hypocrites mixed for their evil designs. The original Arabic word does not here mean 'satans'. It is only a descriptive word used for the inciters of the hypocrites. The word *Shaiṭān* (plural *Shayāṭīn*) comes either from the root شطن *Shaṭana* or شاط *shāṭa* (acr. يشيط inf. n. شيط). The former signifies, 'he was or became remote' 'he caused him to be remote' 'he turned away in opposition to another' and therefore *Shaiṭān* means "one who is remote from the truth, or causes others to become remote from the truth, or who turns away in opposition to truth". Taking the latter root which means 'it burned or

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became burnt or he burned with anger, the word *Shaiṭān* means 'one burning or burnt or doomed to perish'. Thus *Shayāṭīn* signifies 'those men who egged on the hypocrites, and who were burning with jealousy and hate to see the Muslims prosper, and who had gone astray from the truth'. *Shaiṭān* also means 'any proud or rebellious fellow'.

The English translators have rendered the word as 'satans' or 'devils'. Following this wrong translation, Sale and other translators have brought forward the objection that the Holy Qurān has reviled the Jews and Christians in this verse. The objection is evidently due to their failure to grasp the true sense of the word *Shaiṭān* as used here. As already explained, the Arabic word *Shaiṭān* does not always mean a 'devil'. The following tradition lends additional support to this view. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and blessings of God) said to his companions by way of advice:— الراكب شيطان والراكبان شيطانان والثلثة ركب "A single rider is a *Shaiṭān*, a pair of riders is also a pair of *Shaiṭāns*, but three riders are a body of riders". The Holy Prophet could not, for all the world, call his loving followers 'devils'. Evidently, the meaning is that in view of the dangerous condition of the roads and other attendant hazards of a journey in those days, one who journeyed alone ran headlong to his destruction. Even a pair was not safe, and in order to ensure safety, the least number to start on a journey must have been three.

The Holy Prophet also speaks of jealousy and anger as *Shaiṭāns*.

The objection of the English translators has risen from their inadequate acquaintance with the Arabic language. Moreover, they should have been chary of their objections in view of the Gospel texts (Matt. XII, 39; XVI, 4; XXIII, 33; Mark VIII, 38). Jesus calls his opposers 'serpents', 'an adulterous generation', and, 'generation of vipers', and

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styles one of his disciples 'satan' (Matt. XVI, 93, Mark VIII, 33).

الله يستهزئ بهم ويمدهم فى طغيانهم يعمهون۔

16. Allāhu yastahzi 'u bi-him wa yamuddu hum fī tughyānihim yā' mahún.

16. Allah shall requite their jesting ; and he shall let them go on in their transgression wandering blindly.

30. According to the Arabic idiom, sometimes punishment for a vice is denoted by the term already used for the vice itself. The Holy Qurān offers several instances of such uses. We read for instance,

جزاء سيئة سيئة مثلها (الشورى ع ۴)

"And the recompense of evil is evil proportionate thereto" (XIII, 41), although it is obvious that the punishment of evil cannot really be called 'evil'. The verse means that the punishment of evil must be commensurate with the evil itself. Again, فمن اعتدى عليكم فاعتدوا عليه بمثل ما اعتدى عليكم (بقره ع ۲۴) "Therefore whoso transgresses against you, return him the transgression (lit. transgress against him) according as he has transgressed against you". (II, 195.) Evidently, the proportionate punishment for transgression is no transgression. Punishment can be spoken of as transgression only when it is an undue encroachment upon the offender or when it is quite out of proportion to the offence. Thus, in the second place, the word *i'tadau* اعتدوا (transgress) has lost its original sense and means, not transgression, but punishment for transgression.

The idiom is also to be met with in the pre-Islamic poetry. The well-known poet, 'Umar bin Kulthum, says about his foes :—

ألا لا يجهلن احد علينا۔ فنجهل فوق جهل الجاهلينا (سبعه معلقه)

"Beware! none should dare employ ignorance against us; otherwise, we will show greater ignorance in our turn."

i. e. we will avenge his ignorance. (Sab'a Mu'allaqa). Similarly, Abul Haul Ṭahlwi says :—

فنكب عنهم درء الاعادى وداروا بالجنون من الجنون (حماسه)

"He saved the tribe against the onslaught of the enemy, and they repulsed madness by madness" (Himasah), *i.e.*, when the foes took the offensive like mad men, they chastised them with like severity.

Thus, according to the usage of the Holy Qurān itself and other standard Arabic poets, الله يستهزئ بهم should mean "Allah shall requite or punish their jesting", and not, "Allah shall mock or jest at them". The latter meaning as followed by the English translators, is untenable and quite inconsistent with the spirit of the Holy Quran. In this very chapter we read that when the Israelites asked Moses, "Dost thou make a jest of us ?" the latter replied, "I seek refuge with Allah from being one of the ignorant". (Verse 68.) Moses, of course, meant that jest and ridicule were the marks of ignorance. How can then God attribute to himself the same thing which He declares through Moses to be a practice of the ignorant.

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